

Poetry and Songs

A Song

This is a song I wrote in 2009 when I was working as a street sweeper for Exeter City Council, based at the recycling centre on Exton Road, Marsh Barton.

The original idea was to write something about the bizarre practice of making the red colour of lipstick by including cochineal (beetle's blood) as an ingredient. These days most makeup is cruelty free but, particularly in former times, lovers were kissing lips smeared with beetle's blood. Cochineal was also used a colourant in red wine.

I started from the word "lips" and, just for fun, I decided to make every line of the song rhyme with lips.

These were the possible words I could use to rhyme with lips: "blips, chips, clips, dips, Fripp's, flips, grips, hips, kips, nips, quips, rips, tips, trips, whips, zips".
"Fripp's" would be a reference to Robert Fripp, the guitarist.

These are the lyrics I wrote:

Kissing your beetle bloodied lips
Sinking the king of kingdom's ships
Turning upon your flipping hips
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

In and out he quickly nips
down by the old recycling tips
the wage slave under money's whips
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

The radar screen a thousand blips
a stolen riff of Miles' or Fripp's
H.G. wakes halfway through kips
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

A thousand buttons zips and clips
the zoo acquired from all your trips
all kinds in kindness cruelty dips
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

His intellect must come to grips
to make the tea she slowly sips
while staring at the half cold chips
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

As you can see, the references to cruelty to animals and to the recycling centre where I was working both became part of the song. There's a reference to "99 Red Balloons" on the

rhyme “blips” and a reference to riffs by Miles Davis or Robert Fripp. “H.G. wakes” is a reference to H. G. Wells’ book “The Sleeper Awakes” and also to the same author’s “Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul”. In English slang to “kip” means to get some sleep. Both of these H. G. Wells stories deal with the theme of rich and poor. “99 Red Balloons” was about cold war paranoia between capitalist West Germany and communist East Germany. All of these lyrics are about rich/poor, environment, recycling, cruelty, kindness, slavery/bondage and the whole dynamic range of relationships between haves and have nots in a divided society on the brink of environmental disaster. But I wrapped it up in a very mild and silly seeming song lyric and I recorded it in a style halfway between Jake Thackery (“Lah di Dah”) and The Rutles (“Another Day”).

A Song

Laika (odd ditty)

Laika was a space dog
from the streets of Moscow
Laika was a cosmonaut
I don't know what she really thought
she only weighed 5 kilograms and she only lived 3 years
they sent her into space in soviet spacecraft sputnik 2
they sent her into space in soviet spacecraft sputnik 2
she was a hero of the soviet union
They sent her into space where there are not any trees
I don't know whether she had fleas
but probably not
if she did
if she did
they would be the first fleas in outer space
probably
unless there were some other kind of fleas
that come from space
that would be a different case
Instrumental bit
Going into space
Going into space
is a very long way
for a simple dog from the streets of Moscow

oh-oh-oh

But she lived her life like a tallow in the breeze
with or without any fleas

da dabba dooba dooba da da da
da do do da ba da

da do do dabba dabba dabba da
da do do do do do do dabba da
de de de de de

She had dark eyes
"ochi chyornye"
she had dark eyes
dark eyes in Russian is "ochi chyornye"
apparently
I'm not a linguist you see....

(I wanted to be a polyglot ---
--until I found out what the word meant---)

Wanders off, muttering incoherently...

Poems

1

the kangaroo is always blue
the shark lives in the dark
animals which bellow are always yellow
sheep are green or aquamarine
pandas and zebras are very well red
and the dodo is always dead

2

I built a structure full of devils.
It towered up through many levels.
I felt my life was partly masked.
In sun and moonlight sometimes basked.
The search for meaning and the random,
waving at me, riding tandem.
Something numinous, beyond.
Illusory and rond et rond.

3

Feeding a chicken to a cat
makes about as much sense
as feeding a cat to a chicken
That is to say: None.
Feeding a fish to a cat

makes about as much sense
as feeding a cat to a fish
That is to say: What?
Feeding a cow to a cat
makes about as much sense
as feeding a cat to a cow
That is to say: You're kidding me.
Feeding a pig to a cat
makes about as much sense
as feeding a cat to a pig
That is to say: How did people get into this ridiculous situation in the first place?

4

The controlling power
shapes your views
using sport
their favourite ruse
the anaesthetic
they love to use
keep you away
from genuine news
Big Brother Auntie
saves you from thinking
with offered distractions
feel your IQ sinking
in the quicksand
of the numb
dumb
throw us a crumb
jump over hurdles
and away we run
ignorance and smiling, winking,
shut down your brain
with what you're drinking

5

A word of advice
Don't use too much spice
The use of magic in writing
and dazzling in lighting
is like hot spice in food.
I don't wish to brood
but you probably don't wish it

in ALL of your dishes
your pies and knishes
I'll brook no rebuttal
some things should be subtle!

and a thought I'll append then:
remember what happened when
Lord Dunsany & Mickey Mouse
opened a little balti curry house!

A Song

Fourth Wall

I could have loved you like a biscuit tin
you know the tin I put my biscuits in
I could have said all kinds of weird stuff to you
and you could have replied with weird stuff of your own
but you were only a painting of a tree
and I was only something similar to me

(dreadful guitar break)

(Voice slightly muffled, as if from behind a wall)

And in comes the chorus carrying a sledgehammer
he's breaking down the fourth wall....

(strange organ break sounding like a prog rock band from 1973)

(another dreadful guitar break)

He cares nothing for convention
in fact he rather thrives on dissention

(yet another weird and terrible instrumental break)

Interjection: Ahem!

(Instrumental ending)